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SUBJECT: ANKARA MEDIA REACTION REPORT
FRIDAY, JUNE 1, 2007

In Today's Papers

Buyukanit: Turkish Troop Movements on Iraq Border Routine
All papers report the Turkish General Staff (TGS) chief General Yasar Buyukanit told a symposium at the War Academy in Istanbul that he had already drawn the government's attention to the need for launching a cross-border operation into northern Iraq, adding there is no need to submit to the government a written request for political authorization. Buyukanit emphasized that the aim for any operation must be clear. "The target should be set by political authorities; are we just going to go in and fight the PKK or will there be something with Barzani as well?" Buyukanit said, pointing out that "the US is in the middle of it all" as well. The Turkish troop buildup on the border with Iraq is "routine spring planning," Buyukanit said, adding no new troops have been sent to the region.

Commenting on the US transfer of security in northern Iraq to the regional Kurdish administration, Buyukanit said "There is no Shiite security authority in the Shiite region or a Sunni authority in the Sunni region, like the Kurdish one in northern Iraq. This special status is drawing attention, and it is not appropriate."

With regard to the recent violation of Turkish airspace by US F-16 jetfighters, Buyukanit said Americans didn't need to send F-16s to monitor Turkish movements on the border, since they can take pictures from satellites. "The violation by F-16s, however, is not appropriate," Buyukanit stressed.

The army chief also said countries providing logistics, financial and propaganda support to terrorists should also be considered terrorists. "Landmines and explosives such as C-4, A-3, and A-4 which are used in every murder in Turkey are not bought from supermarkets" Buyukanit said, criticizing "the countries among Turkey's allies" that directly or indirectly support the PKK.

Editorial Commentary on Buyukanit Remarks
Mustafa Unal commented in the Islamist-leaning daily Zaman: "There

is no military operation which can be announced beforehand. However the Turkish public has been discussing a possible military operation for days. Given the fact that terrorist elements will be warned by this public discussion, I wonder what the real purpose of the debate is. Can this be a part of internal political tactics? It looks to me like General Buyukanit's recent remarks are a maneuver to corner the AKP government vis-à-vis Turkish public opinion."

Fikret Bila observed in the mainstream daily Milliyet: "General Buyukanit gave some very important messages when he talked about the importance of clearly defined targets in northern Iraq should the Turkish army start a cross border operation. The Chief of General Staff emphasized that every military operation has political targets, and noted that in northern Iraq there is not only the PKK but also Barzani, and the US in the middle of it all. His comments centered on three major points: What is the Turkish government's goal in northern Iraq? Can Barzani be considered one of the targets besides the PKK? What is the Turkish government's position on the US presence in northern Iraq?"

Turkish Parliament Approves Constitutional Reforms

All papers report the Turkish Parliament on Thursday overriding an earlier veto from President Sezer, approved for a second time a controversial package of constitutional reforms that pave the way for voters to elect the president directly. The package now will be returned to Sezer who cannot veto it a second time, but can call a referendum. The reforms cut the term of the president's mandate to five years renewable for a second term, and also reduce parliament's term to four years from five. The main opposition CHP is expected to challenge the amendments in the Constitutional Court, claiming that the adoption is invalid unless approved by a two-thirds majority of 367 votes. The provision reducing parliament's term to

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four years was approved by 366 votes, falling short by one vote.

Kissinger in Istanbul

Sabah, Milliyet, Radikal, and others: Speaking at a conference in Istanbul, former US Secretary of State Henry Kissinger called on the international community to cooperate with the US to end the war in Iraq. Kissinger added that it is Turkey's right to take necessary measures against the possible problems at the Iraqi border; however, these measures should be acceptable to the international community. Kissinger said that the US understands Turkish sensitivity on the issue but will not welcome a cross border operation into Iraq by Turkey. On the issue of Turkey's EU membership, Kissinger said that being part of the European system is very important for Turkey, however, if this process fails, the US should start a close partnership with Turkey.

Controversy over Prayers in Public High School

Hurriyet, Milliyet, Bugun, Zaman and others: Istanbul education director Ata Ozer defended the high school students praying in a prayer room in the basement of the high school saying "there is freedom of worship and conscience in Turkey." Mainstream Hurriyet reports that Bagcilar district prosecutor in Istanbul has initiated an investigation into the incident. Islamist-oriented Yeni Safak and Zaman question the public reaction to the incident asking in front page stories "Is it a crime to pray?"

TV Highlights

NTV, 7.00 A.M.

Domestic News

- Turkish police detained eight suspected al-Qaeda members in Ankara on Wednesday, seizing propaganda material and hardware. On Wednesday, police in Istanbul had detained 11 suspects reported to be in connection with al-Qaeda.

- A bomb mechanism was found in the bag of a Turkish passenger preparing to board an Iran-bound plane in Istanbul's Ataturk Airport. The name of the passenger who was to fly via IranAir to Tehran has not been revealed.

- PKK militants shot dead five forest workers in the southeastern

province of Bingol on Thursday, army sources said. Turkish security forces killed three PKK terrorists in operations in the eastern province of Tunceli.

- Germany has detained two senior members, Faruk E. and Ilhan D., of Turkey's outlawed left-wing DHKP-C (Dev-Sol.). "Faruk E. is suspected of having been a member of the central committee of the DHKP-C, a deputy to the general secretary Dursun Karatas as well as the man responsible for Europe," the federal prosecutor's office said.

- The annual Bilderberg Conference of the global elite will be held in Istanbul from May 31 to June 3 to discuss possible military operations against Iran, Turkey's EU membership, and energy policies. Former Secretary of State Henry Kissinger, World Bank President Paul Wolfowitz, former Secretary of Defense Donald Rumsfeld and UNDP chief Kemal Dervis are some of the international personalities expected to attend this year's meeting.

International News

- UN Security Council has voted to establish an international criminal tribunal to prosecute the masterminds of the February 2005 suicide-bomb killing of former Lebanese Prime Minister Rafiq Hariri and 22 others.

- A suicide bomber hit a police recruiting centre in Fallujah in northern Iraq, killing at least 25 people and wounding 50.

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- Andrei Lugovoi, the man charged by the UK with murdering the Russian dissident Alexander Litvinenko, claims British intelligence was involved in his death.

- Russia's test firing of an intercontinental ballistic missile on Tuesday was in response to US steps that have sparked an arms race, President Putin said.

WILSON